



Bethesda
Lutheran Church

Bethesda Outlook

December, 2009

Grace and peace to you from him who is and who was and who is to come. Revelation 1:4b

Happy New Year!!

It may seem that I am a bit early and what about Merry Christmas? The last Sunday of the church year was November 29th, Christ the King Sunday. On that Sunday we heard in 1st chapter of Revelation not only the words above but also in verse 8 ***"I am the Alpha and Omega, who was, who is and who is to come."***

The time of Advent is a threshold, a gateway, a bridge. When we step into this sacred time, we step into a blurring of future; present and past. We await the coming of God through the Son, Jesus the Christ. So we experience three Advents or comings here and now. The Advent of His first coming in a humble birth as God comes to us, to be with us as Jesus born humbly among the animals in a feeding trough. The Advent of his second coming to reign in our hearts, to come and dwell in us and the third Advent as of His weekly and daily presence in our lives.

I find it very difficult to wait, do you? For me this time is an opportunity to relearn how to wait, to remember as if a new discovery of the art of appreciating the future in an unhurried way of being. What if I could, we could, stay in the present of each and every moment of each and every day and find meaning in the waiting.

Yet, Advent waiting invites us into the quiet and stillness, not into the frenzy of anticipation of the season as the world calls us into celebrating earlier and earlier but into embracing the present. Advent beckons us, calls us, into a state of active waiting; a way of being that sees and recognizes, and embraces the glowing lights and flames of God's active presence in our lives. Advent calls us into the present moments as we sing and proclaim "Oh, come, Oh, come *Emmanuel.*" Emmanuel means in Hebrew "God is with us", so we worship without fear in the present and we shout aloud *Maranatha*, which in Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) is "Come, Lord! Jesus Christ reigns and God is with us. Future enters past and becomes present.

Who was, who is, and who is to come. Advent is the very real in-breaking of future into and past into the present here. **Yes**, right here in Mountlake Terrace in the year 2009! This in-breaking of God is about God coming to us and breaking into our lives to say, *"I love you"* through the birth of this little one. It is about God coming to us and saying to us here right now: *"My beloved Child what might I do for you?"* This Advent we are challenged to seek out God's vision and future for us and for our broken world and live that as a present reality. ***Advent does not mean wishing; advent means coming, the coming presence of God!*** How might *we be* Advent people, the coming presence of God, for and to those around us? Past is ***present!*** The hope that fills Advent is not for a maybe-perhaps-not-yet event. Future is ***now!*** Who was, who is, who is to come.

In the beauty of the deep blues of this Advent season may you seek and discover God filling you up as you live in the present with the hope of a new birth in the being and doing of your life. In the busyness and brightness of the lights all around us in the world may you live in the present moments of each day knowing that God through Jesus Christ is present with you.

In your waiting, may God's love and peace break into your hearts with wonder and hope and may you share that peace, may you be Advent people for our world. May you live in the holy present now and on Christmas morning awaken at the manger to Jesus breaking in and doing new and wonderful things in you.

Merry Christmas to you and all your loved ones and may you find *hope, love, peace and joy* in the coming New Year!

Pastor Malcolm and Charlie Brown

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More Than Membership

"Could this be your niche?"

The "More Than Membership" committee, met on Monday November 9th at 10AM. In attendance were Pr. Malcolm, Pr. Jacquie, Joan Minnis, Pat Olson, Sharon Boyd, Joy DeGraff and Debbie Luce.

This is a newly formed group, comprised of people, from our congregation. The purpose of the group is to offer thoughtful, caring and kind support to anyone in our church, and community, that would like support. It will involve us remembering people in prayer, just being a supportive listener, visiting those that would like a visit, perhaps assisting with locating local social services referral information.

If you think you may feel called to join us, please do! All are welcome to join us for the meeting, next month on December 14th at 10am, in the church office. The only requirement is a heart to serve where God leads you ~

Debbie Luce

Thrivent Financial Update

LUNCHEON FUNDRAISER FOR KITCHEN. We enjoyed our "In The Movies" luncheon and fashion show on September 26, 2009. It was a fun event and we raised \$1,218.00 after expenses. We received \$1,020.00 matching funds from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for our kitchen remodel fund (**Caring Congregations Fund**). Thank you to the Hospitality Committee and kitchen crew for all the planning, a wonderful lunch and for all the set-up and clean-up.

JAZZ FUNDRAISER FOR BETHANY. On October 17, 2009, we had a concert to benefit residents of the Bethany of the Northwest care facilities. After expenses we raised \$660.00 and we are receiving \$250.00 matching funds from Thrivent Financial (**Care Abounds in Community Fund**). We had the church rocking with the City of Refuge Church Band musicians and youth group, Shirley's Girls, Mysteria Liturgical Dancers and our own Bethesda Jammers with guest musicians. Many thanks to all the participants for your great entertainment and thanks to all who contributed goodies for the get together after the concert.

We appreciate all the efforts everyone made for these events along with the donations. You are an awesome congregation!

BOARD REPRESENTATIVE and CONGREGATIONAL COORDINATOR. Donna Veveris agreed to serve on the board of the Southwest Snohomish Chapter 30191 as a special advisor (liason to the board). **She acts as the voice of members, to give them a vote on the board, so if you have any comments to give, please do so at aveveris@comcast.net.** We must have three Congregational Coordinators from our church in order to get the Thrivent benefits. Margaret Berghuis has agreed to take Donna's place next year and we appreciate that they are both willing to serve in these capacities.

VOTING.. All Thrivent members will have ballots mailed to their homes for the local chapter election on November 29. Please bring your ballots to church so that we can count them. You will also sign on the sheet that day to show that you have voted.

Your Thrivent Congregational Coordinators,
Joan Minnis, Jeanette Anstice and Donna Veveris

**Halls Lake
Mothers of Twins Club**

Serving South Snohomish and
North King Counties since 1956

The Halls Lake Mothers of Twins Club is a non-profit organization offering support for families of twins, triplets and more!

Our Commitment is to provide support to other families of multiples through information, education and friendship.

Please contact us or visit our web site for more information and to receive our latest newsletter.

Darlene Miller
206-546-0814
rkmiller4@comcast.net
www.bigtent.com/groups/hlmtoc

All High School Students Welcome
9th – 12th Grade
Senior High Youth Group is forming.
Every Sunday evening from 7-8pm
in the church office building just to the
south of the church at

Bethesda Lutheran Church
23406 ~ 56th Ave W.
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

Bring your friends for this time of,
fellowship, service, fun and study

For more information contact:
Kari Gray @ 206-913-3490 or
Blair Sprouse @ 425-775-5198

A Christmas Prayer

by Dorothy Hsu

It's Christmas, Lord.

The season to be jolly and all that but some of us aren't so jolly. It's time for families to be together, To sing, "I'll be home for Christmas."

But Lord, some of our loved ones won't be home this year, or ever. And some of us find it very difficult to shop for Aunt Jane and Grandpa. Some of us find our minds so occupied with a desperately ill child, or a tired worn out body that we can't cope with crowds or carols. And some of us find that happy memories of Christmases past make this Christmas seem hollow. Altogether unbearable. It's a temptation, Lord, to just skip it. To refuse to decorate a tree, or send a card. Or purchase a single present. For one alone, such an approach is possible, I suppose. But for little ones in a home, Lord, it's unfair.

It takes tremendous strength for some of us to say "Merry Christmas" this year. More strength than Some of us even possess. And that's exactly why you came, isn't it, Lord?

LES OLSEN is out of the hospital and is now staying with family. Here is her new contact information:

c/o Lorie McDaniel
20703 Hwy. 9
Snohomish, WA 98296

425-481-1575

Join us **Sunday, December 13th** as *Bethesda youth and youth from our community* present our second annual showing of ***THE SECOND SHEPHERD'S PAGEANT***, a Renaissance Christmas play with song & dance. There will be two performances so that everyone might have an opportunity to experience this wonderful Wakefield Miracle Play! **Show times: 10:15 am and 3 pm.** The Pageant will be held in the Bethesda Sanctuary.

ADMISSION IS ONE NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEM FOR THE MLT FOODBANK!!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<p>1</p> <p>Brownies 6:30 pm</p> <p>Education Comm. 7:00 PM</p> <p>Jammers 7:15 PM</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>Confirmation 7:00 PM</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM</p> <p>AI-Anon Meeting 7:00-8:00 PM</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Brownies 7:00 PM</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>AA Meeting 6:00-9:00 PM</p> <p>WAM Comm. 6:30 PM</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Children's Play Rehearsal 11:00 AM-2:00 PM</p>
<p>6</p> <p>Worship - 10:15 AM</p> <p>Community Dinner Prep - 3:00-11:00PM</p> <p>High School Youth 7:00-8:30 PM</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Ruth/Miriam Circle 2:00 PM</p> <p>Community Dinner 5:30 PM</p> <p>Kid's Camp 6:00 PM</p> <p>Intern Comm. 7:00 PM</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Brownies 6:30 pm</p> <p>Outreach Comm. 7:00 PM</p> <p>Jammers 7:15 PM</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Esther Circle 10:00 AM</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>Confirmation 7:00 PM</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM</p> <p>AI-Anon Meeting 7:00-8:00 PM</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Brownies 7:00 PM</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>Children's Play Tech. Rehearsal 5:00-8:30 PM</p> <p>AA Meeting 6:00-9:00 PM</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Hospitality Comm. 10:00 AM</p> <p>Baby Shower Noon—3:00 PM</p> <p>Children's Play Dress Rehearsal 11:00 AM-5:00 PM</p>
<p>13</p> <p><i>"The Second Shepherd"</i> 10:15 AM 3:00 PM</p> <p>Community Dinner Prep - 3:00-11:00PM</p> <p>High School Youth 7:00-8:30 PM</p>	<p>14</p> <p>More Than Mem- bership Comm. 10:00 AM</p> <p>Sue's Bible Study 2:00 PM</p> <p>Community Dinner 5:30 PM</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Jammers 7:15 PM</p> <p>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM</p> <p>AI-Anon Meeting 7:00-8:00 PM</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Brownies 7:00 PM</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>AA Meeting 6:00-9:00 PM</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Family Movie Night 5:00 PM</p>
<p>20</p> <p>Worship - 10:15 AM</p> <p><u>Choir Program</u></p> <p>Exec. Comm. Mtg. 1:00 PM</p> <p>Community Dinner Prep - 3:00-11:00PM</p> <p>High School Youth 7:00-8:30 PM</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Community Dinner 5:30 PM</p> <p>Council Meeting 7:00 PM</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Brownies 6:30pm</p> <p>Jammers 7:15 PM</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM</p> <p>AI-Anon Meeting 7:00-8:00 PM</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve Services:</p> <p>Family Service 5:00 PM</p> <p>Candlelight Service 9:00 PM</p>	<p>25</p> <p></p> <p>(office closed)</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27</p> <p>Worship - 10:15 AM</p> <p><u>Lessons & Carols</u></p> <p>Community Dinner Prep - 3:00-11:00PM</p> <p>High School Youth 7:00-8:30 PM</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Sue's Bible Study 2:00 PM</p> <p>Community Dinner 5:30 PM</p> <p>Finance Comm. 7:00 PM</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Twins Club 5:00-9:00 PM</p> <p>Jammers 7:15 PM</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Mtlk. Terr. Sr's. Lunch - Noon</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM</p> <p>AI-Anon Meeting 7:00-8:00 PM</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Brownies 7:00 PM</p>		

DATE		COMMUNION ORGANIZER	USHERS	LAY READER	READINGS	 <p>Happy Birthday!</p>	
Dec. 6	Second Sunday of Advent	Judy Rasmussen	Alix DeGraff Britney Pulse	Charlie Brown	Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6		2 - Judith Schwald 4 - Frances Hinson 6 - Andrew Molitor
Dec. 13	Third Sunday of Advent Sunday School Program	Judy Rasmussen	Alix DeGraff Britney Pulse	Charlie Brown	Zephaniah 3:14-20 Isaiah 12:2-6 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18		10 - Jeanette Anstice Kristina Cochran 11 - Cliff Pearson 13 - Cameron Anstice Tricia Goldsmith
Dec. 20	Fourth Sunday of Advent Choir Program	Judy Rasmussen	Alix DeGraff Britney Pulse	Charlie Brown	Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1:46b-55 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-55		14 - Alice Swierenga 18 - Mikey Van Deren 20 - Robin Anstice 21 - Jim Rasmussen
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	Judy Rasmussen	Alix DeGraff Britney Pulse	Mickey Schwald (9:00 PM)	Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-20		22 - Kasi Reeves (Olson) 23 - Pat Olson 27 - Kelly Matteucci
Dec. 27	First Sunday of Christmas Lessons & Carols	Judy Rasmussen	Alix DeGraff Britney Pulse	Charlie Brown	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26 Psalm 148 Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52		29 - Carol Bader Karen Carroll 31 - Kimberly Van Deren

From our Council President

What's the best definition of the following words?

- **Accuse:** a) to honor b) to familiarize c) to be accountable d) to blame
- **Justify:** a) to be accountable b) to expect c) to be defensive d) to be blameless
- **Blame:** a) to be compassionate b) to respect c) to fault d) to struggle
- **Minister:** a) Pastor b) People c) God d) Jesus
- **Submit:** a) to be oppressed b) to lie like a dog c) to yield to God d) to be obedient

(Answers: Open your hearts. Check your dictionaries.)

Thoughts For The Month

What do you really know about Christmas? Is it possible to keep Christmas sane in these days of Christmas overkill? I'm not a mall shopper person except under dire stress and seeing Christmas decorations, etc., there recently, before it was even Halloween or All Saints Day was a big "Oh, no!" Martin Luther has written: *"There are some of us...who think to ourselves, 'If I had only been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby. I would have washed his linen. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger.'"* Yes, we would. We say that because we know how great Christ is, but we probably would have been the same slackers the people of Bethlehem were. Why don't we do something these days instead of Christmas overkill? We have Christ in our neighbor. Selfishness makes Christmas a burden. Love makes it a delight. When we were small, or should I say much younger, the word "Christmas" was magic. What did it mean to you? We were kids then, spoke as kids, acted like kids, and it was a long time before we understood Christmas as God has meant it to be. Sometimes I think some of us never outgrow our childish concepts of Christmas. But finally we began to learn why Jesus was born— *"A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another..."* At least we finally began to learn that lesson of love—gifts were secondary, the greatest gift is love one another.

So where do we all begin with these teachings? Store hung decorations in October reminding us there are probably only x-amount of shopping days until Christmas. Ah, but no! Look at your calendar celebration marking the first Sunday in Advent. Advent means "coming", the beginning of the time to prepare. It gives us weeks to prepare spiritually, reflect on His coming, enjoy holiday music and other readings of Christmas stories. I have a huge basket of Christmas books for all ages in our family—some favorites are opened every year. Advent can begin with a simple green wreath of boughs or some other holders for the four candles of Advent. Light one a week with thoughts for His coming. Kids love the Advent calendars with the little closed doors or windows with whatever surprise behind each one. Wow! Another day closer to Christmas! The traditional practice of Christmas has been to trim the tree on Christmas Eve—my brother and I always wondered how that could happen without us awakening. Multi-tasking of the 30s? Almost an impossibility now in our haste and waste. Put up a Jesse tree—a reference to Jesse, David's father. From his stump comes the Messiah. Make symbols of Old Testament characters or pictures of their stories to put on some type of tree about the middle of Advent. Kids can also prepare Christ symbols—fish, cross, manger, butterfly, Alpha and Omega, lamb, etc. One

by Jeanne Krahn

Christmas Eve replace the Old Testament symbols with the Christ symbols—a visual way to end Advent and begin Christmas celebrating. On Epiphany, January 6th, place "love gifts" under your Jesse tree such as envelopes with tasks or favors you will do for each other. It can be a good tree for younger ones in the family.

The biggest peace maker and smile maker—what else but the bountiful, special dishes decorating the table. From the years of hosting foreign students, it's always an interest in what are their traditional holiday foods. In Sweden, yuletide begins on December 13 with Saint Lucia's Day, Saint Lucia, represented by a young girl wearing a white dress, crimson sash, and a crown of leaves with lighted candles, visits a household at dawn with a tray of coffee and cakes. This celebration is still held in our Scandinavian communities and the Nordic Heritage Museum. Swedish traditional also calls for a pause in Christmas feasting to remember a time of famine in their history. Families gather around a large kettle filled with broth into which they dip pieces of bread. This tradition called "dipping in the kettle" is a means of giving thanks for seasons' gifts. In Holland, children stuffed their clean wooden shoes with hay and carrots placed on a window sill on Christmas Eve for St. Nick's white horse. On Christmas morning in colonial Virginia, breakfast was large and early followed by a fox hunt. Dinner was at half past three, food was abundant, including fish and foodstuffs from England, such as plum pudding and mince pies. The roasted wild turkey came later. In Poland, before the Christmas Eve meal is served, the master of the house distributes the peace wafers. These are small white wafers which are marked with scenes of the Nativity. Each member of the family shares his wafer with every other person at the table as a token of friendship and a symbol of peace on earth.

Traditions are a wonderful gift that a family shares, particularly for Christmas. What are your traditions? Like the woman who now serves her family spaghetti on Christmas Day after she decided there was more to December 25th than cooking, cooking, cooking. Besides it's her family's favorite meal. And don't gasp at your neighbor hauling a Christmas tree out of her house on December 26th. One of the most special times of your holiday season can be the twelve days after the 25th to January 6th—Epiphany, marking the arrival of the three wise men into Bethlehem.

Keep reading your Christmas stories, keep singing and playing the carols. "Ooh, aah" about the decorations. Reminisce and have a special family dinner. Christmas, you know, really just begins December 25th



Greetings from Gulu!



I have almost completed my first two year term. I am in the process of planning to come home for a three month furlough the end of November. Then I will return to Gulu in February 2010 to serve another two year term. It has been a busy time of learning the culture, language and the ministries of ACTION Gulu. I have settled in as Supervisor at Home of Love Orphanage for Vulnerable Children. It has been exciting to see the changes God has made in the lives of the children He has blessed us with. The ones that were babies when I arrived are toddlers now. They are growing up so fast! This year ACTION Gulu opened a primary school. Twenty-nine of the children at the orphanage attend the school. They are receiving a Christian education. They did well on their report cards last term.

Several of the children have been appointed to leadership positions in their classes. Some of the positions are Timekeeper, Class Monitor, Sports Prefect and Best Boy. They assist the teacher with managing the classroom. There was an official ceremony and each one received a certificate of appreciation and a badge to wear on their school uniform. I can see how proud they are to have been appointed to their positions. Most of our children come from traumatic backgrounds. Pray God will continue to heal them emotionally. They have found something they are good at and that is very special.

The rainy season is off to a good start. We are hoping to have a good harvest in our garden this season. We have had the arrival of a new baby goat. Pastor Jerry Bingham, Director of ACTION Gulu, recently built a new swing set with a slide for the children. They love it!

God bless you!

Angie Lauer



Brian & Fortunate are two of the toddlers that live at Home of Love. Brian was 1 1/2 months old when he was rescued after his father killed his mother and strangled Brian and left him for dead. Fortunate was 2 1/2 months old when she came to us after her mother died and her father had abandoned her. They are growing up healthy and happy. They are very sociable and like to visit me when I am working in the office at Home of Love.

Please pray they will continue to grow strong and healthy. Your prayers and support are making a difference in their lives.

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

Thanks to all of you that gave the children some of your change, we have sent \$739.45 to Action International to help with the Gulu bore hole repair. Angie Lauer made us aware that the main pipe providing water to the Home of Love orphanage and school was bringing up rust in the water. They need to repair before the pipe rusts out totally. The total for the repairs the technician estimated was \$1,600.00 for the two of them.

We hope to have Angie come to visit our church during her furlough and tell us about her experiences.

Thanks again,

Joan Minnis

**Bethesda
Lutheran Church**

23406 56th Ave. W
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

Phone: 425-778-6390

Pastor: Malcolm Brown
Sno-King Cluster Intern: Jacquie Berlien
Church of the Beloved: Ryan Marsh—Deployed

Change Service Requested

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Mountlake Terrace, WA

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We're on the Web!

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Christmas Eve at Bethesda Lutheran Church

*Come and Celebrate
Come to the manger and meet
the Christ Child*

*Bethesda Lutheran Church
2009 Advent & Christmas Services*

November 29th – 1st Sunday of Advent - 10:15am

December 6th – 2nd Sunday of Advent - 10:15am

December 13th – Children's Christmas Program-10:15a

December 20th – Choir Sunday- - 10:15am

December 24th - Christmas Eve Services:

5:00pm Christmas Eve Family Worship

9:00pm Traditional Candlelight Worship Service

December 27th - Christmas Lessons and Carols- 10:15am